

Worship Questions and Answers (Part 2)
Ephesians 5:1-21
August 19, 2007

I. Songs in worship – Ephesians 5:18-21

A. Praise addressed to God alone: singing and making melody to the Lord

B. Praise offered in Spirit and in truth

1. **Christians alone can offer praise – *be filled with the Spirit***
2. **controlled by Biblical truth – *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; spiritual song***
3. **with sincerity – *sing and make melody with all your heart***

C. Praise of special benefit to believers – *addressing one another*

John Calvin: “In truth, we know by experience that singing has great force and power to move and influence the heart of men to invoke and praise God with more vehement and ardent zeal. . . . Among other things adapted for man’s recreation and for giving them pleasure, music is either the foremost, or one of the principal; and we must esteem it as a gift designed for that purpose. Music has a secret and almost incredible power to move hearts.”¹

D. Praise involves a human element – the importance of the wisdom principle

II. Principles regarding song in worship

A. Regulative principle – acceptable way of worshipping God instituted by Him alone (WCF 21.1)

B. Dialogical principle – worship as covenant conversation (DPW 3.1)

C. Wisdom principle – “ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rule of the Word” (WCF 1.6)

III. Psalms in Worship

A. Exclusive psalmody – the arguments

1. **psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)**
2. **inspired praise – can you do better?**
3. **the history of the church**
4. **the regulative principle and the WCF – only what God has given**

B. Sing a new song (Ps. 96:1-3; 98:1-3)

1. **What is a new song? Tell of his marvelous deeds.**

“to ‘sing a new song’ is to make sure that the hymnody of the church accurately reflects the fullness of God’s words and deeds in all stages of redemptive history. As the mighty acts of God unfold in the salvation of his people, the people of God respond with song.”²

2. **The advance of redemptive history (Gal. 4:4)**

¹ Quoted by Iain H. Murray, *Should the Psalter be the Only Hymnal of the Church?* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001), 30-31.

² D. G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2002), 162-3.

- a. “the coming of Christ and his finished work ensured a great advance in light and privilege for the people of God.”³
 - b. e.g. crucifixion (Ps. 22; Gal. 2:20); assurance (I Jn. 3:2; Rom. 8:15); heaven
3. **“I believe there is a confirmation from history of the argument that the larger blessings of the New Testament era warrant additional forms of praise.”⁴**

C. Pattern of the Psalms

1. objective vs. subjective

“the biblical text never gives us the subjective (my experience or my offering of praise or obedience) apart from the objective (God’s saving work in Christ). . . . It never concentrates on what we are to do before establishing what God has already done.”⁵

2. emotional balance

IV. What songs should we sing?

A. Is it singable? (priesthood of all believers)

B. Is it Biblically and theologically sound?

C. Is it Biblically and theologically mature? (Heb. 5:11-6:2)

“All of this is to say that it is crucial that the church’s songs be substantial enough to express accurately mature Christian belief as well as the subtlety of Christian experience.”⁶

D. Is it emotionally balanced?

“Strong emotional appeal without strong biblical-theological expression is manipulation, not worship.”⁷

1. consider the example and pattern of the Psalms

2. tunes ought not overwhelm the words

3. words ought not overwhelm the tune

V. Final Thoughts and Applications on Song in Worship

A. The Aim of Worship – to praise and glorify God

B. The Audience of Worship – the Almighty God

C. The Benefits of Worship

D. The Humility of Worship

³ Iain H. Murray, *Should the Psalter be the Only Hymnal of the Church?* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001), 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵ Michael Horton, *In the Face of God* (Dallas: Word, 1996), 214.

⁶ Terry L. Johnson, “The Pastor’s Public Ministry: Part One,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 60 (Spring 1998): 149.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.